

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-07 IO-11 ISO-00 FEA-01 ERDA-05

AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00 CIEP-01 COME-00 EB-07 FPC-01

H-02 INR-07 INT-05 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 OMB-01 PM-04

USIA-06 SAM-01 OES-03 SP-02 SS-15 STR-04 TRSE-00 PA-01

PRS-01 /122 W

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R 121250Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3996

INFO DIA WASHDC

DOD WASHDC

USMISSION IAEA VIENNA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 2246

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, TECH, IN

SUOWECT: INDIAN NUCLEAR TEST: TIMING

REF: NEW DELHI 2128

1. REFTEL BASICALLY UNDERScored FACT THAT GOI POSITION ON
TIMING OF SECOND NUCLEAR TEST HAS REMAINED UNALTERED SINCE
FIRST TEST IN 1974. GOI HAS CONSISTENTLY EMPHASIZED THAT
DECISION ON SECOND TEST WOULD BE MADE WHEN RE GLTS OF FIRST
TEST WERE ANALYZED: IT HAS NEVER CATEGORICALLY SAID THERE
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WOULD BE A SECOND TEST, BUT ALL INDIAN STATEMENTS RATIONALIZING

THE FIRST TEST HAVE ASSUMED THAT TESTING OF P ES WAS IN INDIA'S NATIONAL INTEREST.

2. EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT GOI HAS HAD CAPABILITY IN TERMS OF BOTH TECHNOLOGY AND FISSIONABLE MATERIAL TO CONDUCT A SECOND TEST AT TIMING OF ITS CHOICE AT ANY POINT IN LAST 18 MONTHS. WE HAVE NO REASON TO CHANGE THAT EVALUATION, AND BELIEVE INDEED THAT CONTINGENT PLANS HAVE BEEN MADE FOR TESTING OF SHORT NOTICE AT ANY TIME.

3. THE KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE GOI (I.E., MRS. GANDHI) WILL BE DOMESTIC POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS AND EXTERNAL FACTORS SUCH AS DEGREE OF EMBARRASSMENT TO INDIAN RELATIONS AS RESULT OF COINCIDENT MEETINGS, VISITS, ETC. TECHNICAL CONSIDERATIONS SUCH AS PREVAILING WINDS AND RAIN ARE ALSO OBVIOUSLH FACTORS.

4. INDO-CANADIAN TALKS ON RENEWAL OF CANADIAN NUCLEAR ASSIS-
TANCE TO INDIA ARE NOW SCHEDULED TO BEGIN THEIYIRST WEEK IN
HURCH IN DELHI. CANADIANS HAVE TOLD GOI REPEATEDLY THAT
GOI RENEWAL OF TESTING WOULD BE FATAL IMPEDIMENT TO SUCCESS
OF SUCH DISCUSSIONS. FOR THIS REASON, WE ARE INCLINED TO
BELIEVE THAT INDIANS WOULD TAKE SERIOUS NOTE OF EFFECT OF
A NUCLEAR TEST IN THE PERIOD BEFORE OR DURING NUCLEAR DIS-
CUSSIONS WITH THE GOC (TO BE LED BY CANADIAN FOREIGN POLICY
ADVISOR TO PM TRUDEAU, IVAN HEAD). WE DO NOT EXCLUDE THE
POSSIBILITY THAT MRS. GANDHI MIGHT SHUG OFF CANADIAN ATTITUDES, IRRIT
A-
TION, AND ASSISTANCE IF SHE SAW DOMESTIC BENEFITS FROM
TESTING QUICKLY. ON BALANCE, HOWEVER, A DECISION TO TEST
WOULD, AT THIS TIME, SEEM MORE LIKELY TO COME AFTER THE GOI
HAS AN OPPORTUNITY TO ASSESS CANADIAN NEGOTIATING POSITIONS
DURING THE FIRST HALF OF MARCH THAN BEFORE THAT TIME.
SAXBE

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